REMARKS

Claims 4-5, 7-12 and 20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

It is initially noted that Claim 1 has been amended to recite "a first write data value and a corresponding first write address value", "a first ECC value" and "a read address value", thereby adding clarity to Claim 1.

Claim 4, which depends from Claim 1, has been amended to recite "the first write address value" and "the read address value". Applicant believes that Claim 4 as amended meets the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

Claim 7 has been amended to recite "a second write data value and a corresponding second address value" and "a second ECC value". Claim 7 has also been amended to replace the term "retiring" with the term "writing". Applicant believes that Claim 7 as amended meets the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

Claims 8, 9 and 20 have been amended to replace the term "retiring" with the term "writing". Claim 20 has also been amended to more clearly identify the various write and read data values. Claims 8, 9 and 20, as amended, meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

Claims 1-3, 6-10, 13-15 and 17-20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gonzales et al. (U.S. Patent 6,101,614). Claim 2 has been canceled, thereby rendering the rejection of this claim moot.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite "means for outputting the first write data value and the first ECC value during a read access if a read address value

associated with the read access matches the first write address value stored in the first storage circuit". Support for this amendment is provided in the specification as originally filed at paragraphs [0028]-[0030]. No new matter is added.

Gonzales et al. fails to teach "means for outputting" as recited by amended Claim 1. For this reason, amended Claim 1 is allowable over Gonzales et al.

Claim 1 has also been amended to recite "the ECC generator being configured to provide the first ECC value as long as the first write data value is stored in the first register". Support for this amendment is provided in the specification as originally filed at paragraphs [0024] and [0027]. No new matter is added.

Gonzales et al. fails to teach "means for outputting" as recited by amended Claim 1. In contrast, Gonzales et al. teach that while write data is stored in a write data buffer, the ECC generator may provide an ECC value associated with a value not stored in the write data buffer. (Gonzales et al., Col. 8, lines 19-28.) For this additional reason, amended Claim 1 is allowable over Gonzales et al.

Claims 2-3 and 6-7, which depend from Claim 1, are allowable over Gonzales et al. for at least the same reasons as Claim 1.

Claim 8, which has been amended to recite "providing the first ECC value as long as the first write data value is stored in the first register", is allowable over Gonzales et al. for reasons similar to Claim 1.

Claims 9 and 10, which depend from Claim 8, are allowable over Gonzales et al. for at least the same reasons as Claim 8.

Claim 13 recites "a write-back buffer configured to store the corrected first data/ECC value in response to the asserted error indicator signal".

The Examiner indicates that the "read data buffers" of Gonzales et al. correspond with "a write-back buffer" as recited by Claim 13. However, Gonzales et al. teach that the read data buffers only store corrected read data values, and not ECC values. (Gonzales et al., Col. 7, lines 41-56.) In fact, Gonzales et al. specifically teach that the corrected read data values must be retrieved from the read data buffers and subsequently provided to the ECC code word generation unit, in order to re-generate the associated ECC values. (Gonzales et al., Col. 8, lines 25-28.) Because the read data buffers of Gonzales do not store ECC values associated with the corrected read data values, Gonzales et al. fails to teach "a write-back buffer configured to store" a "corrected first data/ECC value" as recited by Claim 13. For this reason, Claim 13 is allowable over Gonzales et al.

Claims 14 and 15, which depend from Claim 13, are allowable over Gonzales et al. for at least the same reasons as Claim 13.

Claim 17, which recites "storing the first corrected data/ECC value … in a write-back buffer" is allowable over Gonzales et al. for reasons similar to Claim 13.

Claim 18, which depends from Claim 17, is allowable over Gonzales et al. for at least the same reasons as Claim 17.

Claim 19, which recites "a write-back buffer configured to store the corrected first data/ECC value" is allowable over Gonzales et al. for reasons similar to Claim 13.

Claim 20, which recites "storing the first corrected data/ECC value … in a write-back buffer" is allowable over Gonzales for reasons similar to Claim 13.

CONCLUSION

Claims 1 and 3-20 are pending in the present application. Reconsideration and allowance of these claims is requested. If the Examiner has any questions or comments, he is invited to call the undersigned at (925) 895-3545.

Respectfully submitted,

Customer No.: 022888

E. Eric Hoffman
Attorney for Applicants
Reg. No. 38,186

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as FIRST CLASS MAIL on the date shown below in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA, 22313-1450.

_2/23/05_
Date

Carrie Reddick
Signature: Carrie Reddick